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Mr. George H. Wells
London
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Shakespeare's Home;

VISITED AND DESCRIBED BY

WASHINGTON IRVING AND F. W. FAIRHOLT;

WITH A

LETTER FROM STRATFORD BY J. F. SABIN;

AND THE

Complete Prose Works

OF

SHAKESPEARE.

With Etchings by J. F. and W. W. Sabin.

NEW YORK :

J. SABIN & SONS, 84 NASSAU STREET.

1877.

INDEX OF PLATES

TO

SHAKESPEARE'S HOME.

THE following etchings are not put forth with claims to originality farther than as to variations in treatment. We have noted the want of a neat little book on the subject, and we have endeavored to produce it.

Falstaff after G. Cruikshank, } Vignette on Title.
in the large paper copies only.

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ERRATA.

Page 55.—For “Smith takes,” read “Smith finds.”

Page 59.—For “little Latin and less Greek,” read “small
Latine and lesse Greeke.”

Page (83), 10th line.—“Ear not are so barren,” should
read “Ear so barren.”

To the Editor :

DEAR SIR,—You kindly inform me, that it is your intention to issue a small volume on the home of Shakespeare. As well might you undertake to print the works of Shakespeare on a needle's point. A small volume, forsooth ! on the home of Shakespeare. His home is in the human heart, and in the hearts of all, speaking the language he wrote or reading his works translated. Fie, for shame ! go to !

Shakespeare's real home, where is it not ? As far as human foot has trod, either in the arctic or the torrid zone, his voice and influence have been heard and felt. The tattered leaves of his much read volume are carefully cared for by the trapper of the West and the wandering emigrant of New Zealand. It cheers the lagging hours of the prisoner in his cell, and forms the text for universal conversation. The school-boy spouts his lines, the lover copies his verses, the soldier is fired by his enthusiasm, the justice tempers his sentences by a quotation, the lean and slippered pantaloon pores over his tome, and the last stage of all finds hope and consolation in his ever-living lines.

The Home of Shakespeare ! What a theme. He had, he has indeed a home, and to his love of home, perhaps, is due the strong affection which we cherish for him. Amid the gay attraction of the Metropolis of Elizabeth, and her court, he found time to think,

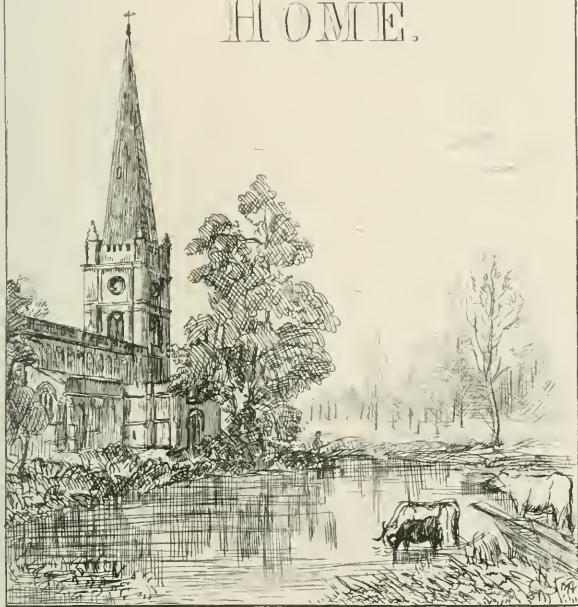
and to think much, of Stratford and its surroundings. To this spot his journeys were frequent, and he kept himself well informed of the condition and prospects of his birthplace. Here dwelt his Anne, the jointure of his name and fame, the partner of his heart and home, and here his children were reared and educated, and married, aye, and married well ; and here clustered all those hopes and fears for the future, all those dear remembrances of the past. To this spot then, on laying aside the buskin, our Shakespeare oft repaired, for consultation and recreation for new brain work, and is it too much to say, that assistance was rendered him by his Anne Hathaway ? I trow not.

It is rather remarkable, that amid the mighty intellects, which clustered around the dramatic stage of the period, such as Marlow, Peele, Greene and others, few or none had homes, had families, or left a name (save their writings) worthy to be compared at all with Shakespeare's. In what church do they lie, what effigies stand for them ; in what memories do they live, like unto our Shakespeare ?—none. They had no homes—for them to-day, for our Shakespeare, to-morrow,—were their several ideas. Then, all hail ! our Shakespeare, for his love of home ; and be he on our hearts enthroned.

C. W. FREDERICKSON.

Shakespeare's

HOME.



THE
HOME OF SHAKESPEARE.

Thou soft flowing Avon, by thy silver stream
Of things more than mortal sweet Shakespeare would dream,
The fairies by moonlight dance round his green bed,
For hallowed the turf is which pillowed his head.

GARRICK.

ALL that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakespeare, is, that he was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, married and had children there, went to London, where he commenced actor, and wrote poems and plays, returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried. Such is the concise biography of our greatest poet, as given by Steevens ; and although volumes have been written, more or less conjectural, on his life and times, they scarcely add a single fact to the meagre list of ordinary events he has enumerated. Slight, however, as these notices are, they invest the humble town of Stratford-upon-Avon with an interest which it would not otherwise possess. It was peculiarly the "*Home of Shakespeare* ;" here he was born ; here he passed his early youth ; here he courted and won Ann Hath-

away ; here he sought that retirement which the avocations of his London career would occasionally allow him to indulge in ; and here, when in riper age he had won honors and fortune in the great capital, he chose to return, and pass the latter days of a life where he had first seen the light. At Stratford he died and was buried. All that connects itself with the personal history of the "world's Poet" at Stratford is thus almost as closely condensed as are the few words quoted above, which form his biography. A day at Stratford affords ample time to visit all these places ; they lie so close, that a few minutes walk only separates them. In these days of change, it must be a work of interest to record and picture the few relics connected with the Bard of Avon, more particularly as alterations are continually taking place there, which, if they do not destroy, do at least change the aspect of much that is interesting to all lovers of the poet, and "their name is legion." We will therefore conduct the reader over Stratford and its neighborhood, minutely describing all that at present exists, and enumerating what has passed away, commencing our journey at

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE.

The house in Henley Street, as it at present exists, is but a fragment of the original building as purchased by John Shakespeare, the Poet's father, in 1574, ten years exactly after the birth of his son William, the entry of whose baptism is dated in the

Parish Register, April 26, 1564. John Shakespeare had purchased in 1555 a copyhold house in Henley Street, but this was not the house now shown as the poet's birth-place ; he had also another copyhold residence in Greenhill Street, and some property at Ingon, a mile and a quarter from Stratford, on the road to Warwick. From these circumstances a *modern* doubt has been cast on the truthfulness of the tradition which assigns the house in Henley Street to be the poet's birth-place. Mr. Knight says : "William Shakespeare, then, might have been born at either of his father's copyhold houses in Greenhill Street or in Henley Street. He might have been born at Ingon, or his father might have occupied one of the the two freehold houses in Henley Street at the time of the birth of his eldest son. Tradition says that William Shakespeare *was* born in one of these houses, tradition points out the very room in which he was born. *Let us not disturb the belief.*" A wise conclusion !

Antiquarian credulity has given place to an extreme degree of skepticism ; and from believing too much, we are now too much given to believe too little ; add to this the anxiety many evince to write about Shakespeare, although little else but conjecture in its vaguest form be the result ; and the value of modern conjecture as opposed to the ancient tradition may very readily be estimated. Let Stratford ever sacredly preserve the venerable structure with which she is entrusted. Pilgrims from all climes

have felt a glow of enthusiasm beneath the humble roof in Henley Street. Let no rude pen destroy such homage, or seek to deprive us of the little we possess connected with our immortal bard !

When John Shakespeare purchased this house from Edmund Hall, for forty pounds, it was described in the legal document as two messuages, two gardens, and two orchards, with their appurtenances. It passed at his death to his son William, and from him to his sister, Joan Hart, who was residing there in 1639, and probably until her death, in 1646. Throughout the poet's life, the house is thus intimately connected with him. It was a large building, the timbers of substantial oak, the walls filled in with plaster. The dormer windows and gable, the deep porch, the projecting parlor and bay window, all contributed to render it exceedingly picturesque. The division of the house into two tenements is very visible. In 1792, when Ireland visited the house, the dormer windows and gable had been removed, the bay window beneath the gable had given place to an ordinary flat latticed window of four lights, the porch in front of that portion of the building in which Shakespeare was born was removed, and a butcher's shop-front constructed. At this time there lived here a descendant of Joan Hart, sister to the poet, who pursued the humble occupation of a butcher. The other half of the house was at this time converted into an inn, and ultimately sunk into a low public house. It had been known



as the Maidenhead Inn in 1642, and when, in 1806, the house was disposed of to Mr. Thomas Court, who became "mine host" thereof, he combined that name with the one it then held, of *The Swan*. About 1820, excited by a desire for "improvement," he destroyed the original appearance of this portion of the building by constructing a new red-brick front, exactly of the approved fashion in which rows of houses are built in small towns, and which consists generally of an alternate door and window, repeated at regular intervals, below, while a monotonous range of windows above, effectually repulses attention.

This brings us to its present aspect (1847), delineated in our illustration. The house is now divided into three tenements; the central one is the portion set apart for exhibition, in the back rooms of which live the proprietors; the shop, the room above, and the kitchen, are sacred to visitors. When the lower part of the central tenement was made to serve for a butcher's shop, its window was removed, and has not been replaced; and when the butcher's trade ceased, a few years since, no attempt at restoration was made, and the shop still retains the signs of its late occupation. The old window in the upper story, originally a lattice of three lights, had been altered into one of four, and modern squares of glass usurped the place of the old leaded diamond panes. A board for flower-pots was erected in front of the window; but more recently a large, obtrusive, rudely

painted sign-board projects from the front to tell us
"The immortal Shakespeare was born in this house."

Such is its present external aspect. "It is a small, mean-looking edifice," says Irving. Ascending the step, we pass into the shop. The door is divided into a hatch, and we look back into the street above the lower half, and through the open window of the shop, with its projecting stall for meat, and its wooden roof above. The walls of this room are of plaster, and the solid oak beams rest on the stone foundation. On entering, the visitor looks towards the kitchen, through the open door communicating with the shop. On the right is a roomy fire-place, the sides built of brick, and having the chimney-piece above cut with a low-pointed arch out of a massive beam of oak. To the left of the door is a projection in the wall, which forms a recess or "bacon cupboard," the door of which opens in the side of the kitchen chimney of the adjoining room. The floor is covered with flagstones, broken into fifty varied shapes; the roof displays the bare timbers upon which the upper story rests. A raised step leads from the shop to the kitchen; it is a small square room, with a stone floor and a roof of massive timbers. A door opposite the shop leads to an inner room, inhabited by the person who shows the house. The fire-place here is large and roomy, the mantletree a solid beam of oak. Within the fire-place, on one side, is a hatch, opening to the "bacon cupboard" already spoken of; on the opposite side is a

small arched recess for a chair ; here often sat John Shakespeare, and here his young son William passed his earliest days. Ireland compares the kitchen to the subjects which “ so frequently employed the rare talents of Ostade.” In the corner of the chimney stood an old oak chair, which had for a number of years received nearly as many adorers as the celebrated shrine of the Lady of Loretto. This relic was purchased in July, 1790, by the Princess Czartoryska, who made a journey to this place in order to obtain intelligence relative to Shakespeare ; and being told that he had often sat in this chair, she placed herself in it, and expressed an ardent wish to become a purchaser ; but being informed that it was not to be sold at any price, she left a handsome gratuity to old Mrs. Harte, and left the place with apparent regret. About four months after, the anxiety of the Princess could no longer be withheld, and her secretary was despatched express, as the fit agent, to purchase this treasure at any rate ; the sum of twenty guineas was the price fixed on, and the secretary and chair, with a proper certificate of its authenticity on stamped paper, set off in a chaise for London. With that anxiety to supply relic-hunters who visit Stratford, and who sometimes feel disappointed with the little which remains there connected with the poet, the absence of the *genuine* chair was not long felt. A very old chair is still in the place, and Washington Irving thus speaks of the chair he saw in 1820 : “The most favorite object of curiosity, however, is

Shakespeare's chair. It stands in the chimney-nook of a small gloomy chamber, just behind what was his father's shop. Here he may many a time have sat when a boy, watching the slowly revolving spit with all the longing of an urchin ; or of an evening, listening to the crones and gossips of Stratford, dealing forth churchyard tales and legendary anecdotes of the troublesome times of England. In this chair it is the custom for every one that visits the house to sit : whether this is done with the hope of imbibing any of the inspiration of the bard, I am at a loss to say ; I merely mention the fact ; and mine hostess privately assured me, that though built of solid oak, such was the present zeal of devotees, that the chair had to be new bottomed at least once in three years. It is worthy of notice also, in the history of this extraordinary chair, that it partakes something of the volatile nature of the Santa Casa of Loretto, or the flying chair of the Arabian enchanter ; for though sold some years since to a northern princess, yet, strange to tell, it has found its way back again to the old chimney corner."

Of the sort of Shakespearian relics exhibited in the house at this time, he gives an amusing list. "There was the shattered stock of the very matchlock with which Shakespeare shot the deer, on his poaching exploit ; there, too, was his tobacco box, which proves that he was a rival smoker of Sir Walter Raleigh ; the sword also with which he played Hamlet ; and the identical lanthorn with which Friar

Lawrence discovered Romeo and Juliet. There was an ample supply, also, of Shakespeare's mulberry tree, which seems to have as extraordinary powers of self-multiplication as the wood of the true cross, of which there is enough extant to build a ship of the line."

Opposite the fire-place in the kitchen is a window, and beside this is the stair which leads into the room in which the poet was born. It is a low-roofed apartment, receiving its only light from the large window in front. The same huge beams project from the plastered walls, one of considerable solidity, crossing the ceiling. The fireplace projects close to the door which leads into the room; an immense beam of oak forms the mantel-tree; a large piece is cut out of one corner—the work of an enthusiastic young lady, so said the late proprietress, who declares that she was kept in conversation below by the lady's female friend while the act was done. She told many similar stories of Shaksperian enthusiasm, and never left the room or lost sight of anyone after this daring trick. To be permitted to sleep a night in the room, she stated, was an ordinary request made to her, which she occasionally gratified; while such fits of enthusiasm as bursting into tears, or falling down and kissing the floor, were ordinary matters scarcely worth her noticing.

Of the old furniture in this room, and that throughout the house, it may be hardly necessary to remark, that it has no absolute connection with Shakespeare.

A portrait of Shakespeare, on panel—a poor performance—was brought from the White Lion Inn, a few doors from this house.

In this room the visitor, if he pleases, may sign his name in the book kept for that purpose. About 1815, the conductors of the Public Library of Stratford gave to Mrs. Hornby, the then proprietress of the house, a book for that purpose, the walls and windows having been covered before. Among many hundreds of names of persons of all grades and countries, occur those of Byron, Scott, and Washington Irving, the last three times. Many are accompanied by expressions of feeling, others by stanzas and attempts at poetry, which have been thus commented upon by one among the number:—

“Our Shakspeare, when we read the votive scrawls
With which well-meaning folks deface these walls ;
And while we seek in vain some lucky hit,
Amidst the lines whose nonsense nonsense smothers,
We find, unlike thy Falstaff in his wit,
Thou art not here the cause of wit in others.”

The most curious feature of the room is the myriad of pencilled and inked autographs, which cover walls, windows, and ceiling, and which cross and re-cross each other occasionally, so closely written and so continuous that it gives the walls the appearance of being covered with fine spider-webs. Irving, speaking of the house, says: “The walls of its squalid chambers are covered with names and

inscriptions in every language, by pilgrims of all nations, ranks and conditions—from the prince to the peasant—and present a simple but striking instance of the spontaneous and universal homage of mankind to the great Poet of Nature.” Books for entry of names are now kept.

In the adjoining public-house, when Ireland visited it in 1792, was a square of glass, upon which was painted the arms of the Merchants of the Wool Staple, which he considered to be conclusive evidence of the trade of Shakespeare’s father, who by some authors was said to have been a dealer in wool. Aubrey assures us he was a butcher. Mr. Knight has clearly pointed out the likely origin of both stories, in the custom of landed proprietors like John Shakespeare, selling their own cattle and wool. The glass was brought there from the Guild Chapel ; it therefore has no connection with Shakespeare.

In a lower room of the public-house, Ireland also saw “a curious, ancient monument above the chimney, relieved in plaster ; which, from the date, 1606, that was originally marked on it, was probably put up at the time, and possibly by the poet himself. In 1759 it was repaired and painted in a variety of colors, by the old Mr. Thomas Harte, before mentioned.” Upon the scroll over the figures was inscribed, “Samuel XVII. A.D. 1606 ;” and round the border, in a “continuous line, was this stanza, in black letter :—

“Golith comes with sword and spear,
And David with a sling ;
Although Golith rage and sweare,
Down David doth him bring.”

Ireland gives an engraving of this solitary fragment of the interior decoration of Shakespeare's house, although we much question the propriety of imagining the possibility of Shakespeare placing such ludicrous doggerel there. The house was at that time occupied by his sister, and she most probably resided in the other half of this then large tenement ; so that neither may have been guilty of it. The bas-relief was carried away some years ago by the proprietor of the inn. The font in which the poet was christened is now but a fragment, the upper portion only. The same style was adopted with singular good taste for the new font in the church, which may therefore be considered as a restoration of it. Mr. Knight has thus given its history : “The parochial accounts of Stratford show that about the middle of the seventeenth century, a new font was set up ; the beautiful relic of an older time, from which William Shakespeare had received the baptismal water, was, after many years, found in the old charnel house. When that was pulled down, it was kicked into the church-yard, and half a century ago was removed by the parish-clerk to form the trough of a pump at his cottage. Of the parish-clerk it was bought by the late Captain Saunders, and from his possession came into that of the present owner, Mr. Heritage, a

builder at Stratford." It is still in his possession. The font shown at the Shakespeare Arms, is reported to have been brought from the neighboring church of Bidford.

From the house where Shakespeare was born to the place where he obtained his "small Latin and less Greek," is but a short distance.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

is situated in the High Street, beside the chapel of the Guild, or of the Holy Cross, a good specimen of the ecclesiastical architecture of the reign of Henry VII. ; and the interior of which was originally decorated with a series of remarkable paintings ; the principal being the legendary history of the holy cross. In this chapel, at one time, the school was held ; and an order in the corporation books, dated February, 1594, directs "that there shall be no school kept in the chapel from this time following." The occupation of the chapel as a school may have been but a temporary thing ; but Shakespeare may have imbibed some portion of his learning within its walls. The foundation of the grammar school took place in the reign of Edward IV. In 1482, Thomas Joliffe gave certain lands and tenements to the Guild of the Holy Cross, to maintain "a priest fit and able in knowledge to teach grammar to all scholars coming to the school in the said town to him, taking nothing of the scholars for their teaching." On the dissolution of the Guild, Edward VI, in the seventh

year of his reign, ordered that "the free grammar school for the instruction and education of boys and youth there, should be thereafter kept up and maintained as heretofore it used to be."

The Latin school-room is situated over the old Guildhall, and is that portion of the building nearest the chapel. It is a perfectly plain room, with a low plastered ceiling ; but from the massive beams at the sides of room, and those above the modern plaster, to which the struts from the side beams form the support, as well as from the external appearance of the deeply pitched roof, there can be little doubt that an open timber roof originally decorated this apartment.

The Mathematical school-room beside it, has a flat roof, crossed by two beams of the Tudor era ; and in the centre of the roof, where they meet each other, is a circular ornament or boss. The school has been recently repaired, and it has entirely lost its look of antiquity.

A few years ago there were many very old desks and forms there ; and one among them was termed Shakespeare's desk. It is now kept below. The tradition which assigned it to Shakespeare may be very questionable ; its being the oldest and in the worst condition may have been the reason for such an appropriation. The boys of the school very generally carried away some portion of it as a memento, and the relic-hunters frequently behaved as boyishly, so that a great portion of the old wood has been

abstracted. The court-yard of the school presented many features of interest ; but the hand of modern "improvement " has swept them away.

In 1840 the schools were approached by an antique external stair, roofed with tile, and up which the boys had ascended from the time of Shakespeare. This characteristic feature has passed away. The court-yard has been subdivided and walled ; and the original character of this portion of the building has departed for ever. For the mementoes of Shakespeare's later life, we must look in the neighborhood of Stratford. Tradition assigns adventures and visits to many places in its vicinity ; but the most important locality with which his name is connected is the Park of Sir Thomas Lucy at

CHARLECOTE.

Charlecote was the scene of his deer-stealing adventures, which led, says tradition, to his quarrel with Sir Thomas, to a lampoon by the poet, which occasioned him to leave Stratford for London in greater haste than he wished, and produced his connection with the theatres. Of these tales we must speak further on. But first let us say a few words on this ancient mansion. Dugdale has given the history of Charlecote and its lords with much minuteness. It is mentioned in Domesday Book, and its old Saxon name Ceorlcote—the home of the husbandman—carries us back to years before the Conquest. The present house was built in 1558 by Thomas Lucy, who in 1593 was knight-

ed by Queen Elizabeth. It stands at a short distance from, and at some little elevation above, the river Avon. The building forms three sides of a quadrangle, the fourth being occupied by a handsome central gate house, some distance in advance of the main building. The octangular turrets on each side, and the oriel window over the gate are peculiar and pleasing features. The house retains its gables and angular towers, but has suffered from the introduction of the large and heavy sash windows of the time of William III. or George I. In Thomas' edition of Dugdale's *Warwickshire*, published in 1730, there is an interesting "East prospect of Charlecote," drawn by H. Beighton in 1722, which gives a curious bird's-eye view of the entire house and gardens in their original state; that is, the state in which Shakspeare saw them. Any modernization has affected the interior principally; the exterior aspect is now much the same as it was in the days of the poet.

Washington Irving thus describes Charlecote in his "Sketch Book: "

"I had now visited the usual objects of a pilgrim's devotion, but I had a desire to see the old family seat of the Lucys, at Charlecot, and to ramble through the park where Shakespeare, in company with some of the roysters of Stratford, committed his youthful offense of deer-stealing. In this harebrained exploit we are told that he was taken prisoner, and carried to the keeper's lodge, where he remained all night in doleful captivity. When brought into the

presence of Sir Thomas Lucy, his treatment must have been galling and humiliating ; for it so wrought upon his spirit as to produce a rough pasquinade, which was affixed to the park gate at Charlecot.*

This flagitious attack upon the dignity of the knight so incensed him, that he applied to a lawyer at Warwick to put the severity of the laws in force against the rhyming deer-stalker. Shakespeare did not wait to brave the united puissance of a knight of the shire and a country attorney. He forthwith abandoned the pleasant banks of the Avon and his paternal trade ; wandered away to London ; became a hanger-on to the theatres ; then an actor ; and, finally, wrote for the stage ; and thus, through the persecution of Sir Thomas Lucy, Stratford lost an indifferent wool-comber, and the world gained an immortal poet. He retained, however, for a long time, a sense of the harsh treatment of the Lord of Charlecot, and revenged himself in his writings ; but in the sportive way of a good-natured mind. Sir Thomas is said to be the original Justice Shallow,

* The following is the only stanza extant of this lampoon :

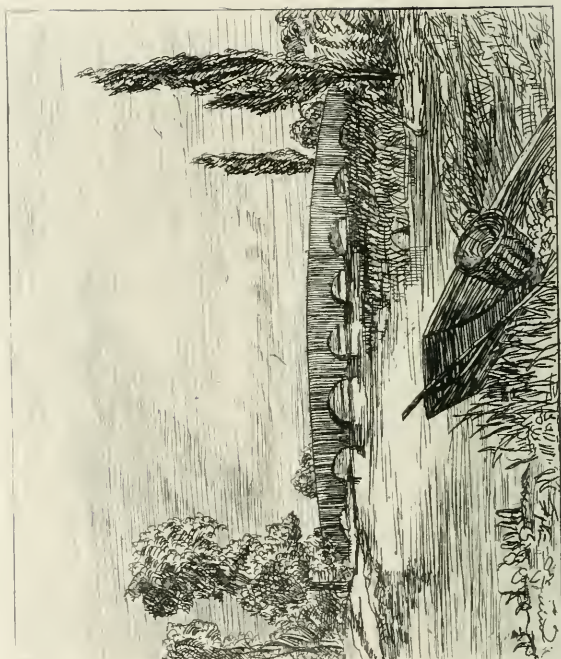
A parliament member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, at London an asse,
If lowsie is Lucy, as some volke miscalle it,
Then Lucy is lowsie, whatever befall it.
 He thinks himself great ;
 Yet an asse in his state,
We allow by his ears but with asses to mate,
If Lucy is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
Then sing lowsie Lucy whatever befall it.

and the satire is slyly fixed upon him by the justice's armorial bearings, which, like those of the knight, had white luces* in the quarterings.

Various attempts have been made by his biographers to soften and explain away this early transgression of the poet; but I look upon it as one of those thoughtless exploits natural to his situation and turn of mind. Shakespeare, when young, had doubtless all the wildness and irregularity of an ardent, undisciplined, and undirected genius. The poetic temperament has naturally something in it of the vagabond. When left to itself it runs loosely and wildly, and delights in everything eccentric and licentious. It is often a turn-up of a die, in the gambling freaks of fate, whether a natural genius shall turn out a great rogue or a great poet; and had not Shakespeare's mind fortunately taken a literary bias, he might have as daringly transcended all civil, as he has all dramatic laws.

I have little doubt that, in early life, when running, like an unbroken colt, about the neighborhood of Stratford, he was to be found in the company of all kinds of odd anomalous characters; that he associated with all the madcaps of the place, and was one of those unlucky urchins, at mention of whom old men shake their heads, and predict that they will one day come to the gallows. To him the poaching in Sir Thomas Lucy's park was doubtless like a

* The luce is a pike or jack, and abounds in the Avon about Charlecot.



foray to a Scottish knight, and struck his eager, and as yet untamed, imagination, as something delightfully adventurous.*

* A proof of Shakspeare's random habits and associates in his youthful days may be found in a traditionary anecdote, picked up at Stratford by the elder Ireland and mentioned in his "Picturesque Views on the Avon."

About seven miles from Stratford lies the thirsty little market-town of Bidford, famous for its ale. Two societies of the village yeomanry used to meet, under the appellation of the Bidford toppers, and to challenge the lovers of good ale of the neighboring villages to a contest of drinking. Among others, the people of Stratford were called out to prove the strength of their heads; and in the number of the champions was Shakspeare, who, in spite of the proverb that "they who drink beer will think beer," was as true to his ale as Falstaff to his sack. The chivalry of Stratford was staggered at the first onset, and sounded a retreat while they had yet legs to carry them off the field. They had scarcely marched a mile when, their legs failing them, they were forced to lie down under a crab-tree, where they passed the night. It is still standing, and goes by the name of Shakspeare's tree.

In the morning his companions awakened the bard, and proposed returning to Bidford, but he declined, saying he had had enough, having drank with

Piping Pebworth, Dancing Marston,
Haunted Hilbro', Hungry Grafton,
Dudging Exhall, Papist Wicksford,
Beggarily Broom, and Drunken Bidford.

"The villages here alluded to," says Ireland, "still bear the epithets thus given them: the people of Pebworth are still famed for their skill on the pipe and tabor: Hilborough is now called Haunted Hilborough; and Grafton is famous for the poverty of its soil."

The old manor of Charlecot and its surrounding park still remain in the possession of the Lucy family, and are peculiarly interesting, from being connected with this whimsical but eventful circumstance in the scanty history of the bard. As the house stood but little more than three miles' distance from Stratford, I resolved to pay it a pedestrian visit, that I might stroll leisurely through some of those scenes from which Shakespeare must have derived his earliest ideas of rural imagery.

The country was yet naked and leafless ; but English scenery is always verdant, and the sudden change in the temperature of the weather was surprising in its quickening effects upon the landscape. It was inspiring and animating to witness this first awakening of spring ; to feel its warm breath stealing over the senses ; to see the moist, mellow earth beginning to put forth the green sprout and the tender blade ; and the trees and shrubs, in their reviving tints and bursting buds, giving the promise of returning foliage and flower. The cold snowdrop, that little borderer on the skirts of winter, was to be seen with its chaste white blossoms in the small gardens before the cottages. The bleating of the new-dropt lambs was faintly heard from the fields. The sparrow twittered about the thatched eaves and budding hedges ; the robin threw a livelier note into his late querulous wintry strain ; and the lark, springing up from the reeking bosom of the meadow, towered away into the bright fleecy cloud, pouring

forth torrents of melody. As I watched the little songster, mounting up higher and higher, until his body was a mere speck on the white bosom of the cloud, while the ear was still filled with his music, it called to mind Shakespeare's exquisite little song in *Cymbeline* :—

Hark ! hark ! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs,
On chaliced flowers that lies.

And winking mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes ;
With everything that pretty bin,
My lady sweet arise !

Indeed the whole country about here is poetic ground : everything is associated with the idea of Shakespeare. Every old cottage that I saw, I fancied into some resort of his boyhood, where he had acquired his intimate knowledge of rustic life and manners, and heard those legendary tales and wild superstitions which he has woven like witchcraft into his dramas. For in his time, we are told, it was a popular amusement in winter evenings "to sit round the fire, and tell merry tales of errant knights, queens, lovers, lords, ladies, giants, dwarfs, thieves, cheaters, witches, fairies, goblins, and friars." *

* Scot, in his "*Discoverie of Witchcraft*," enumerates a host of these fireside fancies. "And they have so fraid us with bull-beggars, spirits, witches, urchins, elves, hags, fairies,

My route for part of the way lay in sight of the Avon, which made a variety of the most fancy doublings and windings through a wide and fertile valley ; sometimes glittering from among willows, which fringed its borders ; sometimes disappearing among groves, or beneath green banks ; and sometimes rambling out into full view, and making an azure sweep round a slope of meadow land. This beautiful bosom of country is called the Vale of the Red Horse. A distant line of undulating blue hills seems to be its boundary, whilst all the soft intervening landscape lies in a manner enchained in the silver links of the Avon.

After pursuing the road for about three miles, I turned off into a footpath, which led along the borders of fields, and under hedgerows to a private gate of the park ; there was a stile, however, for the benefit of the pedestrian ; there being a public right of way through the grounds. I delight in these hospitable estates, in which every one has a kind of property—at least as far as the footpath is concerned. It in some measure reconciles a poor man to his lot, and, what is more, to the better lot of his neighbor, thus to have parks and pleasure-grounds thrown

satyrs, pans, faunes, syrens, kit with the can sticke, tritons, centaurs, dwarfes, gigantes, imps, calcars, conjurors, nymphes, changelings, incubus, Robin-good-fellow, the spoorne, the mare, the man in the oke, the hell-waine, the fier drake, the puckle, Tom Thombe, hobgoblins, Tom Tumbler, boneless, and such other bugs, that we were afraid of our own shadowes."



open for his recreation. He breathes the pure air as freely, and lolls as luxuriously under the shade, as the lord of the soil ; and if he has not the privilege of calling all that he sees his own, he has not, at the same time, the trouble of paying for it, and keeping it in order.

I now found myself among noble avenues of oaks and elms, whose vast size bespoke the growth of centuries. The wind sounded solemnly among their branches, and the rooks cawed from their hereditary nests in the tree-tops. The eye ranged through a long, lessening vista, with nothing to interrupt the view but a distant statue ; and a vagrant deer stalking like a shadow across the opening.

There is something about these stately old avenues that has the effect of Gothic architecture, not merely from the pretended similarity of form, but from their bearing the evidence of long duration, and of having had their origin in a period of time with which we associate ideas of romantic grandeur. They betoken also the long-settled dignity, and proudly concentrated independence of an ancient family ; and I have heard a worthy but aristocratic old friend observe, when speaking of the sumptuous palaces of modern gentry, that "money could do much with stone and mortar, but, thank Heaven, there was no such thing as suddenly building up an avenue of oaks."

It was from wandering in early life among this rich scenery, and about the romantic solitudes of the adjoining park of Fullbroke, which then formed

a part of the Lucy estate, that some of Shakespeare's commentators have supposed he derived his noble forest meditations of Jaques, and the enchanting woodland pictures in "As You Like It." It is in lonely wanderings through such scenes, that the mind drinks deep but quiet draughts of inspiration, and becomes intensely sensible of the beauty and majesty of nature. The imagination kindles into reverie and rapture ; vague but exquisite images and ideas keep breaking upon it ; and we revel in a mute and almost incommunicable luxury of thought. It was in some such mood, and perhaps under one of those very trees before me, which threw their broad shades over the grassy banks and quivering waters of the Avon, that the poet's fancy may have sallied forth into that little song which breathes the very soul of a rural voluptuary :—

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And tune his merry throat
Unto the sweet bird's note,
Come hither, come hither, come hither.
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather.

I had now come in sight of the house. It is a large building of brick, with stone quoins, and is in the Gothic style of Queen Elizabeth's day, having been built in the first year of her reign. The exterior remains very nearly in its original state, and may be

considered a fair specimen of the residence of a wealthy country gentleman of those days. A great gateway opens from the park into a kind of courtyard in front of the house, ornamented with a grass-plot, shrubs, and flower-beds. The gateway is in imitation of the ancient barbican; being a kind of outpost, and flanked by towers; though evidently for mere ornament, instead of defence. The front of the house is completely in the old style; with stone-shafted casements, a great bow-window of heavy stone-work, and a portal with armorial bearings over it, carved in stone. At each corner of the building is an octagon tower, surmounted by a gilt ball and weathercock.

The Avon, which winds through the park, makes a bend just at the foot of a gently sloping bank, which sweeps down from the rear of the house. Large herds of deer were feeding or reposing upon its borders; and swans were sailing majestically upon its bosom. As I contemplated the venerable old mansion, I called to mind Falstaff's encomium on Justice Shallow's abode, and the affected indifference and real vanity of the latter:

"Falstaff. You have a goodly dwelling and a rich.

"Shallow. Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John:—marry, good sir."

Whatever may have been the joviality of the old mansion in the days of Shakespeare, it had now an air of stillness and solitude. The great iron gateway that opened into the courtyard was locked;

there was no show of servants bustling about the place ; the deer gazed quietly at me as I passed, being no longer harried by the moss-troopers of Stratford. The only sign of domestic life that I met with was a white cat, stealing with wary look and stealthy pace towards the stables, as if on some nefarious expedition. I must not omit to mention the carcass of a scoundrel crow which I saw suspended against the barn wall, as it shows that the Lucys still inherit that lordly abhorrence of poachers, and maintain that rigorous exercise of territorial power which was so strenuously manifested in the case of the bard.

After prowling about for some time, I at length found my way to a lateral portal, which was the every-day entrance to the mansion. I was courteously received by a worthy old housekeeper, who, with the civility and communicativeness of her order, showed me the interior of the house. The greater part has undergone alterations, and been adapted to modern tastes and modes of living. There is a fine old oaken staircase ; and the great hall, that noble feature in an ancient manor-house, still retains much of the appearance it must have had in the days of Shakespeare. The ceiling is arched and lofty ; and at one end is a gallery, in which stands an organ. The weapons and trophies of the chase, which formerly adorned the hall of a country gentleman, have made way for family portraits. There is a wide, hospitable fire-place, calculated for an ample

old-fashioned wood fire, formerly the rallying place of winter festivity. On the opposite side of the hall is the huge Gothic bow-window, with stone shafts, which looks out upon the courtyard. Here are emblazoned, in stained glass, the armorial bearings of the Lucy family for many generations, some being dated in 1558. I was delighted to observe in the quarterings the three *white luces*, by which the character of Sir Thomas was first identified with that of Justice Shallow. They are mentioned in the first scene of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," where the Justice is in a rage with Falstaff for having "beaten his men, killed his deer, and broken into his lodge." The poet had, no doubt, the offences of himself and his comrades in mind at the time, and we may suppose the family pride and vindictive threats of the puissant Shallow to be a caricature of the pompous indignation of Sir Thomas.

"*Shallow.* Sir Hugh, persuade me not ; I will make a Star Chamber matter of it ; if he were twenty John Falstaffs, he shall not abuse Sir Robert Shallow, Esq.

"*Slender.* In the county of Gloster, justice of peace, and *Coram.*

"*Shallow.* Ay, cousin Slender, and *custalorum.*

"*Slender.* Ay, and *ratalorum* too, and a gentleman born, master parson ; who writes himself *Armigero* in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *Armigero.*

"*Shallow.* Ay, that I do ; and have done any time these three hundred years.

"*Slender.* All his successors gone before him have done 't, and all his ancestors that come after him may ; they may give the dozen *white-luces* in their coat. * * * * *

Shallow. The council shall hear it; it is a riot.

Evans. It is not meet the council hear of a riot; there is no fear of Got in a riot; the council, hear you, shall desire to hear the fear of Got, and not to hear a riot; take your vizaments in that.

Shallow. Ha! o' my life, if I were young again, the sword should end it!"

Near the window thus emblazoned hung a portrait by Sir Peter Lely, of one of the Lucy family, a great beauty of the time of Charles the Second. The old housekeeper shook her head as she pointed to the picture, and informed me that this lady had been sadly addicted to cards, and had gambled away a great portion of the family estate, among which was that part of the park where Shakspeare and his comrades had killed the deer. The lands thus lost had not been entirely regained by the family even at the present day. It is but justice to this recreant dame to confess that she had a surpassingly fine hand and arm.

The picture which most attracted my attention was a great painting over the fireplace, containing likenesses of Sir Thomas Lucy and his family, who inhabited the hall in the latter part of Shakspeare's lifetime. I at first thought that it was the vindictive knight himself, but the housekeeper assured me that it was his son; the only likeness extant of the former being an effigy upon his tomb in the church of the neighboring hamlet of Charlecot.* The picture

* This effigy is in white marble, and represents the Knight in complete armor. Near him lies the effigy of his wife, and on

gives a lively idea of the customs and manners of the time. Sir Thomas is dressed in ruff and doublet; white shoes with roses in them; and has a peaked yellow, or, as Master Slender would say, "a cane-colored beard." His lady is seated on the opposite side of the picture, in wide ruff and long stomacher, and the children have a most venerable stiffness and formality of dress. Hounds and spaniels are mingled in the family group; a hawk is seated on his perch in the foreground, and one of the children holds a bow; all intimating the knight's

her tomb is the following inscription, which, if really composed by her husband, places him quite above the intellectual level of Master Shallow:—

"Here lyeth the Lady Joyce Lucy, wife of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot in ye county of Warwick, Knight, Daughter and heir of Thomas Acton of Sutton in ye county of Worcester Esquire, who departed out of this wretched world to her heavenly kingdom ye 10 day of February in ye yeare of our Lord God 1595 and of her age 60 and three. All the time of her lyfe a true and faythful servant of her good God, never detected of any cryme or vice. In religion most sounde, in love to her husband most faythful and true. In friendship most constant; to what in trust was committed unto her most secret. In wisdom excelling. In governing of her house, bringing up of youth in ye fear of God that did converse with her most rare and singular. A great maintayner of hospitality. Greatly esteemed of her betters; misliked of none unless of the envious. When all is spoken that can be saide a woman so garnished with virtue as not to be bettered and hardly to be equalled by any. As shee lived most virtuously so shee died most Godly. Set downe by him yt best did knowe what hath byn written to be true.

Thomas Lucye.

skill in hunting, hawking, and archery—so indispensable to an accomplished gentleman in those days.*

I regretted to find that the ancient furniture of the hall had disappeared ; for I had hoped to meet with the stately elbow-chair of carved oak, in which the country squire of former days was wont to sway the sceptre of empire over his rural domains ; and in which, it might be presumed, the redoubted Sir Thomas sat enthroned in awful state when the recreant Shakspeare was brought before him. As I like to deck out pictures for my own entertainment, I pleased myself with the idea that this very hall had been the scene of the unlucky bard's examination on the morning after his captivity in the lodge. I fancied to myself the rural potentate, surrounded by his body-guard of butler, pages, and blue-coated serving-men, with their badges ; while the luckless culprit was brought in, forlorn and chopfallen, in the cus-

* Bishop Earle, speaking of the country gentleman of his time, observes, " his housekeeping is seen much in the different families of dogs, and serving men attendant on their kennels ; and the deepness of their throats is the depth of his discourse. A hawk he esteems the true burden of nobility, and is exceedingly ambitious to seem delighted with the sport, and have his fist gloved with his jesses." And Gilpin, in his description of a Mr. Hastings, remarks, " he kept all sorts of hounds that run buck, fox, hare, otter, and badger ; and had hawks of all kinds, both long and short-winged. His great hall was commonly strewn with marrow-bones, and full of hawk-perches, hounds, spaniels, and terriers. On a broad hearth, paved with brick, lay some of the choicest terriers, hounds, and spaniels."

tody of gamekeepers, huntsmen, and whippers-in, and followed by a rabble rout of country clowns. I fancied bright faces of curious housemaids peeping from the half-opened doors ; while from the gallery the fair daughters of the knight leaned gracefully forward, eyeing the youthful prisoner with that pity "that dwells in womanhood."—Who would have thought that this poor varlet, thus trembling before the brief authority of a country squire, and the sport of rustic boors, was soon to become the delight of princes, the theme of all tongues and ages, the dictator to the human mind, and was to confer immortality on his oppressor by a caricature and a lampoon !

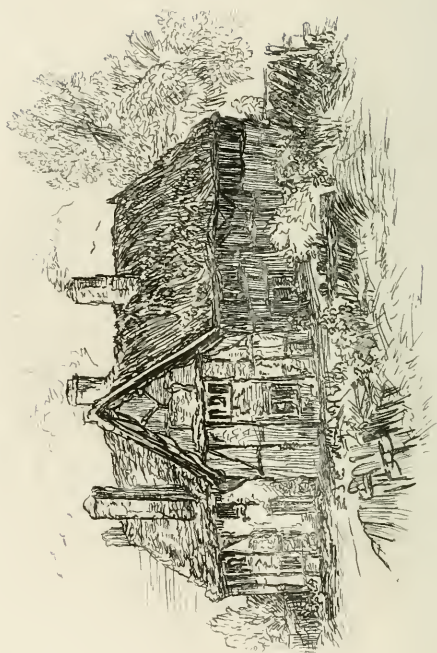
I was now invited by the butler to walk into the garden, and I felt inclined to visit the orchard and arbor where the Justice treated Sir John Falstaff and Cousin Silence "to a last year's pippin of his own grafting, with a dish of caraways ;" but I had already spent so much of the day in my ramblings that I was obliged to give up any further investigations. When about to take my leave I was gratified by the civil entreaties of the housekeeper and butler that I would take some refreshment—an instance of good old hospitality which, I grieve to say, we castle-hunters seldom meet with in modern days. I make no doubt it is a virtue which the present representative of the Lucys inherits from his ancestors ; for Shakespeare, even in his caricature, makes Justice Shallow importunate in this respect, as witness his pressing instances to Falstaff :—

"By cock and pye, sir, you shall not away to-night * * * I will not excuse you ; you shall not be excused ; excuses shall not be admitted ; there is no excuse shall serve ; you shall not be excused * * * Some pigeons, Davy ; a couple of short-legged hens ; a joint of mutton ; and any pretty little tiny kick-shaws, tell William cook."

I now bade a reluctant farewell to the old hall. My mind had become so completely possessed by the imaginary scenes and characters connected with it, that I seemed to be actually living among them. Everything brought them, as it were, before my eyes ; and, as the door of the dining-room opened, I almost expected to hear the feeble voice of Master Silence quavering forth his favorite ditty :—

"'Tis merry in hall, when beards wag all,
And welcome merry shrove-tide !"





ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE.

A quick walk by a field path, along which our Poet must have often wandered, leads to the cottage of his "lady-love." It is a pleasant walk, a short mile from Stratford. Quiet and luxuriant is the landscape which meets the eye all around: cornfields, and pasture-land and snug farms: the quiet old-fashioned gables of Shottery before; the wood-embosomed houses of Stratford behind; where from among the trees shoots up the elegant spire of one of the most beautiful of English country churches.

Shottery abounds with old half-timbered houses; and one, now a little road-side inn, called "The Shakespeare," is a capital example, and stands beside the field-path at the commencement of the lane leading to Anne's house. Proceeding down this lane, we cross a brook; a few yards farther and we reach the house.

It is a long thatched tenement of timber and plaster, substantially built upon a foundation of squared slabs of lias shale, which is a characteristic of the Warwickshire cottages, and is seen in Shakespeare's birthplace, as already noted. On looking up at the central chimney, the spectator may be startled at the date, which is (I H 1697.) It is cut on stone, and let into the bricks; and simply records the reparation

of the house by John Hathaway, who appears to have done much for its comforts, as we shall see. But the house itself has come in for a share of the doubts which have succeeded the credulity of past times, and it has been declared not to be Anne's father's. Mr. Knight has sifted the evidence, and triumphantly disproved the doubt. John Hathaway held property at Shottery in 1543. Richard Hathaway, the father of Anne, was intimate with Shakespeare's father, for the latter stood as his bondman in an action at law dated 1576. There is no doubt that the Hathaways held the house here long before; the *purchase* was, however, only effected in 1606. That Anne should be described as "of Stratford" in the marriage-bond is not singular: Shottery is but a hamlet of the parish of Stratford.

This house, like Shakespeare's birthplace, is subdivided into three tenements. The square, compact, and taller part of the building forms one house. The other two are divided by the passage, which runs entirely through the lower half, from the door in front, to which the steps lead, to that at the back. This passage serves for both tenements. That to the right on entering consists of one large room below, with a chimney extending the whole width of the house, with an oven and boiler; showing that this was the principal kitchen when the house was all in one. The door to the left leads into the parlor. It is a large, low-roofed room, ceiled with strong beams of timber, and much resembling the kitchen

of Shakespeare's birthplace. A "bacon cupboard" of similar construction, is also on the left side of the fire-place, upon the transverse bar of which is cut "I H · E H · I B · 1697," the initials of John Hathaway, his wife Anne, and, it may be, the maker of the door, which has been cut ornamentally. The first two initials and the date are the same as upon the large chimney, which belongs to this room, and which has been already noticed. Upon an old table beneath the window, "M · H" is carved ; all indicative of the proprietors. Mr. Knight says : "The Shottery property, which was called Hewland, remained with the descendants of the Hathaways till 1838." The present resident in the central tenement is the granddaughter of John Hathaway Taylor, a relative, whose Bible, dated 1776, still lies on the dresser. He was a man who cared little for relics, or the associations connected with the house, which was then seldom visited. The furniture, and a full service of antique pewter, which had garnished the dresser for many years, in his time disappeared. When Ireland visited this cottage in 1792 he speaks of the descendants of the family as "poor and numerous ;" and at this time he saw and purchased an old oak chair, which he has engraved in his *Picturesque Views on the Avon*. He says it was called "Shakespeare's courting chair." With a similar desire to please relic-lovers to that which has been already shown to have once existed in Shakspeare's birthplace concerning the chair there, this chair, although long

since gone, has a successor dignified by the same name, in an old settle in the passage through the house, and which has but one old bit of wood, the seat, in it. It is but fair to add, that those who are skeptical are not met by bold assertions of its genuineness, although there be no denial of its possible claim to that quality ; but all credulous and believing persons are allowed the full benefit of their faith. In addition to Shakespeare's chair, Ireland was shown " a purse which had been likewise his, and handed down from him to his granddaughter, Lady Barnard, and from her to the Hathaway family" then existing. At the time of the Stratford Jubilee, George, the brother of David Garrick, purchased from the old lady who then lived here an inkstand and a pair of fringed gloves, said to have been worn by Shakespeare. David, with his usual carefulness, purchased no such doubtful ware.

The bedroom over this parlor is ascended by a ladder-like stair ; and here stands an old carved bedstead, certainly as old as the Shakespearian era. It is elaborately and tastefully executed, and has been handed down as an heir-loom with the house. In Ireland's time, the old woman of the house, who was then upwards of seventy, declared that she had slept in the bed from her childhood, and was always told it had been there ever since the house was built. Whether there in Anne's time, or brought there since, it is ancient enough for her or her family to have slept in, and adds an interest to the quaint bed-room

in the roof. In a chest beside it is a pillow-case and sheet, marked "E. H.," and ornamented with open-work down the centre ; they are of home-spun fabric, the work of "the spinster" when single country girls earned the name.

The back-view of the house is more picturesque than the front one. The ground rises from the road to a level with the back door. Tall trees over-shadow it, and a rustic stile beside them leads into a meadow, where stand some cottages as old as the home of the Hathaways. There is much to interest the student-lover of the old rural life of England in Shottery.

From the period of Shakespeare's marriage to that of his retirement from London, there is nothing to connect him with Stratford and its neighborhood. We must look elsewhere. But with the natural love of a true-hearted man, we find that he made his native town *the home* he visited whenever he had the opportunity, and chose for his place of retirement when the busy metropolitan duties he had fulfilled ensured him competence. In

NEW PLACE,

the house he had purchased at the early age of 33, he died at that of 52. "He was wont to go up to his native country once a year," says Aubrey ; and he had so intimately connected himself with Stratford by the purchase of property and other things, that his mind was evidently fixed on that town with an

endearing affection through life, and which led him to look towards it as his resting-place.

New Place, we are informed by Dugdale, was originally erected by Sir Hugh Clopton, temp. Henry VII. It was, he says, "a fair house, built of brick and timber." It was sold to the Underhill family, and was purchased from them by Shakespeare in 1597, who having repaired and remodelled it to his own mind, changed the name to New Place, which it retained until its demolition.

Shakspeare, by his will, gave it to his daughter, Mrs. Hall, for her life, and then to her daughter Elizabeth, afterwards Lady Barnard. On her death it was sold to Sir Edward Walker, whose only daughter marrying Sir John Clopton, it again came into the hands of its ancient possessors. Sir John gave it to his younger son, Sir Hugh, who resided in it during the latter part of his life, and died there in Dec. 1751. By him the mansion was repaired, and the modern front built to it ; and here, in 1742, he entertained Macklin, Garrick and Dr. Delaney, beneath the mulberry-tree which Shakespeare had planted in the garden.

By Sir Hugh's son-in-law the mansion was sold, in 1753, to the Rev. F. Gastrell, a man of unhappy temper, who being annoyed by visitors requesting to see the mulberry-tree, ruthlessly cut it down in 1756 to save himself the trouble of showing it. This rendered him exceedingly unpopular in the town, and he resided there but seldom : but the house being rated as if he had constantly lived there, in a fit of ill hu-

mor he declared that *that* house should never be assessed again,—he pulled it down, sold the materials, and left the town universally execrated. There are no ruins of the house as it was in Shakespeare's time.

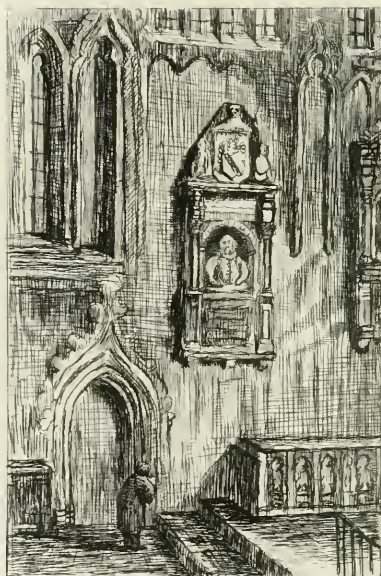
The view so frequently engraved is an imposition. Malone first published it "from an ancient survey," in which it is not stated to represent New Place, or any other place in particular.

He ordered the discoverer of this survey, Mr. Jordan of Stratford, to add the arms of Shakespeare over the door, because "they were likely to have been there!" and to add "neat wooden pales" in front. To which liberal direction Jordan added the porch! and so originated this authentic picture. A view of New Place, as altered by Sir Hugh Clopton, and as it appeared previous to its demolition, may be seen in Mr. R. B. Wheler's "History of Stratford-on-Avon." Not a feature of the ancient Shakespearian residence had then been suffered to remain. In the garden of Mr. Hunt, to whose family Mrs. Gastrell sold the site of New Place in 1775, are two fragments of the house. One is a stone lintel, the other a portion of sculpture, in stone also, which may have been placed over a door. It is ornamented with a shield, but the bearings cannot now be distinguished, owing to decay. On each side are groups of flowers, also much injured by time.

It is traditionally reported that the White Lion Inn was built from the materials of New Place. The panelling of an entire room was fitted up in the par-

lor of the Falcon Inn opposite, where it still remains. It exhibits a series of square sunk panels, covering the entire walls, the upper row being elongated, with a plain cornice and dentels above. From the similarity of the panel and cornice upon which the portrait of Shakspeare is painted, already spoken of as standing in his birth-room, and the tradition that it was brought from the White Lion Inn, it may have been also a part of the decoration of New Place when it was last "repaired and beautified."

There is another and an apparently genuine relic of New Place at present in the possession of the Court family, who own Shakspeare's house. It is a square of glass, measuring 9 inches by 7, in which a circular piece is leaded, having the letters "W. A. S." for William and Anne Shakspeare, tied in a "true lover's knot," and the date, 1615, the year before the Poet's death, beneath. A relative of the late Mrs. Court, whose ancestor had been employed to pull down New Place, had saved this square of glass, but attached little value to it. He gave it to her, but she had an honest dislike to the many pretenders to relics, and never showed this glass unless it was expressly requested by the few who had heard of it. She told her story simply, made no comments, and urged no belief. The letters and figures are certainly characteristic: they are painted in dark brown outline, tinted with yellow; the border is also yellow. The lead is decayed, and the glass loose. It altogether appears to be as genuine a relic as any that have been offered.



SHAKESPEARE'S TOMB

is in the chancel of the beautiful church of Stratford, It is placed against a blank window, on the left of the spectator, as he faces the altar. How soon it was erected after the Poet's death, we cannot confidently say; but that it was before 1623 we can ascertain from Leonard Digges' verses prefixed to the first edition of the Poet's works.

A half length figure of him is placed in a niche; above is his arms, on each side of which are seated cherubs, one holding an inverted torch, with a skull beside him, the other a spade; on the apex above is another skull. Beneath the cushion upon which the Poet is writing is inscribed:

JVDICIO PYLIUM, GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,
TERRA TEGIT POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS HABET.

STAY PASSENGER; WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST?
READ, IF THOV CANST, WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST
WITHIN THIS MONVMENT: SHAKSPEARE, WITH WHOME
QVICKE NATVRE DIDE; WHOSE NAME DOTI DECK YS TOMBE
FAR MORE THEN COST; SITH ALL YT HE HATH WRITT
LEAVES LIVING ART BVT PAGE TO SERVE HIS WITT.

Obiit. Ano. Doi. 1616.
Aetatis 53, Die, 23 Ap.

The half-length effigy of Shakespeare was originally painted after nature. The eyes were a light hazel; the hair and beard auburn. The dress was a scarlet doublet slashed on the breast, over which was a loose black gown without sleeves. The upper part of the cushion was crimson, the lower green; the cords which

bound it and the tassels were gilt. John Ward, grandfather of the Kembles, caused the tomb to be repaired and the original colors restored in 1748, from the profits of the performance of *Othello*. In 1793 Malone, in an evil hour, gained permission to paint it white ; and also the effigy of Shakspeare's friend, John Combe, who lies beside the altar. Mr. Knight has most justly stigmatized this act as one of "unscrupulous insolence." Certainly Malone was at much pains to write himself down an ass.

We learn from Dugdale's correspondence that the sculptor of this monument was Gerard Johnson. His work has been subjected to much criticism, particularly by such as are anxious to have Shakespeare not only a great poet, but a handsome man. This bust does not please them. Mr. Skottowe declares that it "is not only at variance with the tradition of Shakespeare's appearance having been prepossessing, but irreconcilable with the belief of its ever having borne a striking resemblance to any human being." A most sweeping conclusion, against which most modern authors and artists have arrayed themselves. It is a curious fact that Martin Droeshout's portrait, prefixed to the folio of 1623, and beneath which Ben Jonson has affixed verses attesting its accuracy, and which all his "fellows" who aided in this edition, as well as others who knew and loved the man, could also confirm, bears a decided similarity to this bust. Marshall seems to have depended on the same authority for the portrait he

engraved for the edition of Shakspeare's poems in 1640. All agree in one striking feature, the noble forehead and quiet, unostentatious, kindly expression of feature which must have belonged to "the gentle Shakespeare." These early artists appear to have been literal copyists, and the bust at Stratford is the best, and I incline to think the only authority to be depended on. It was probably cut from a cast taken after death; and it is remarkable that it stands as good a test phrenologically as if it had been adapted to the Poet—a singular instance of its truth. Another corroborative proof exists in what has been objected to as inaccurate, the length of the upper lip; but Sir Walter Scott, whose intellect most nearly approached the Poet, had the same feature and the same commanding head.

The ghastly white paint upon the bust, the high position it occupies in the church, and the bad light that there falls on it, hinders the due appreciation of its merits. The features are regular, nay, handsome and intelligent; but it is evident that such a head depended on its living expression, and that then it must have been eminently gentle and prepossessing. The lower part of the face, though inclined to be fleshy, does not injure the features, which are all delicately formed, and the side-view of the head is very fine. An intense study of this bust enforces the belief, that all the manifold peculiarities of feature so characteristic of the Poet, and which no *chance* could have originated, and no the-

ory account for, must have resulted from its being a transcript of the man ; one that has received the confirmation of his own living relatives and friends, the best and only portrait to be now relied on.

The gravestones of the Shakespeare family lie in a row in front of the altar rails, upon the second step leading to it ; that of his wife is immediately beneath his own. It is a flat stone, the surface, which is much injured by time, having a small brass plate let in it with this inscription.

HERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODY OF ANNE,
WIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, WHO DEPART-
ED THIS LIFE the 6 day of Aug.: 1623, being of the age
of 67 years ;

Vbera tu mater, tu lac vitamq ; dedisti,
Vae mihi pro tanto munere Saxa dabo,
Quam mallet amoveat lapidem bonus Angel'ore'
Exeat Christi corpus imago tua ;
Sed nil vota valent, venias cito Christe, resurget,
Clausula licet tumulo mater, et astra petet.

Next comes that placed over the body of the Poet. It is right, here, to state that the four lines upon it have been generally printed with an absurd mixture of great and small letters. The only peculiarity it possesses over ordinary inscriptions is the abbreviation for the word *that*, and the grouping together of some of the letters after the fashion of a monogram.

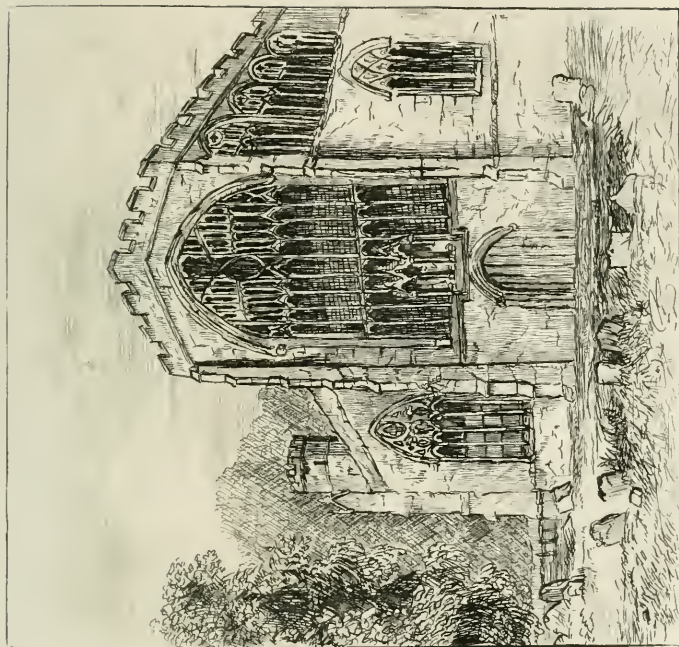
GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE;
BLESTE BE YE MANYt SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Yt MOVES MY BONES

Other instances of similar usages are common in inscriptions of the same age. There is a traditionary story, bearing date 1693, which says "his wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him," but that "not one for fear of the curse above said, dare touch his gravestone."

"The inscription on the tombstone has not been without its effect," says Mr. Irving. It has prevented the removal of Shakespeare's remains from the bosom of his native place to Westminster Abbey, which was at one time contemplated. A few years since also, as some laborers were digging to make an adjoining vault, the earth caved in, so as to leave a vacant space almost like an arch, through which one might have reached into his grave. No one, however, presumed to meddle with his remains so awfully guarded by a malediction; and lest any of the idle or curious or any collector of relics, should be tempted to commit depredations, the old Sexton kept watch over the place for two days, until the vault was finished and the aperture closed again. He told me that he had made bold to look in at the hole, but could see neither coffin nor bones; nothing but dust. It was something, I thought, to have seen the dust of Shakespeare. Next to this grave are those of his wife, his favorite daughter, Mrs. Hall,

and others of his family. On a tomb close by, also, is a full-length effigy of his old friend John Combe, of usurious memory, on whom he is said to have written a ludicrous epitaph. There are other monuments around, but the mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakespeare. This idea pervades the place ; the whole pile seems but as his mausoleum. The feelings, no longer checked and thwarted by doubt, here indulge in perfect confidence ; other traces of him may be false or dubious, but here is palpable evidence and absolute certainty. As I trod the sounding pavement, there was something intense and thrilling in the idea, that in very truth, the remains of Shakespeare were mouldering beneath my feet. It was a long time before I could prevail upon myself to leave the place ; and as I passed through the churchyard, I plucked a branch from one of the yew trees, the only relic that I have brought from Stratford."

Next to that of Shakespeare lies a stone commemorating the resting place of Thomas Nash, who married the only daughter of the poet's daughter, Susanna ; this lady afterwards married Sir John Barnard, and died at Abington, near Northampton, in 1670, in whom the direct line of the poet's issue ceased. Dr. John Hall, her father, lies next ; and last comes Susanna, his wife. The whole of the rhyming part of her epitaph had been obliterated, and upon the place was cut an inscription to the memory of one Richard Watts.



This in its turn has been erased, and the original inscription restored by lowering the surface of the stone and re-cutting the letters. The tombs of Hall and Nash have also been renovated by deepening the letters and recutting the armorial bearings, which has been done under the judicious and careful superintendence of R. B. Wheler, Esq., of Stratford, at the sole expense of the Rev. W. Harness, whose public-spirited and honorable act deserves as much praise as Malone's miserable meddling does reprobation.

Washington Irving concludes his "Sketch; Stratford-on-Avon," in these words: "On returning to my inn I could not but reflect on the singular gift of the poet, to be able thus to spread the magic of his mind over the very face of nature, to give to things and places a charm and character not their own, and to turn this "working-day world" into a perfect fairy-land. He is indeed the true enchanter, whose spell operates, not upon the senses, but upon the imagination and the heart. Under the wizard influence of Shakespeare, I had been walking all day in a complete delusion. I had surveyed the landscape through the prism of poetry, which tinged every object with the hues of the rainbow. I had been surrounded with fancied beings, with mere airy nothings conjured up by poetic power; yet which, to me, had all the charm of reality. I had heard Jaques soliloquize beneath his oak; had beheld the fair Rosalind and her companion adventuring through the woodlands; and above all, had been

once more present in spirit with fat Jack Falstaff and his contemporaries, from the august Justice Shallow down to the gentle Master Slender and the sweet Anne Page. Ten thousand honors and blessings on the bard who has thus gilded the dull realities of life with innocent illusions ; who has spread exquisite and unbought pleasures in my checkered path, and beguiled my spirit in many a lonely hour with all the cordial and cheerful sympathies of social life !

As I crossed the bridge over the Avon on my return, I paused to contemplate the distant church in which the poet lies buried, and could not but exult in the malediction which has kept his ashes undisturbed in its quiet and hallowed vaults. What honor could his name have derived from being mingled in dusty companionship with the epitaphs and escutcheons and venal eulogiums of a titled multitude ? What would a crowded corner in Westminster Abbey have been, compared with this reverend pile, which seems to stand in beautiful loneliness as his sole mausoleum ! The solicitude about the grave may be but the offspring of an over-wrought sensibility ; but human nature is made up of foibles and prejudices, and its best and tenderest affections are mingled with these factitious feelings. He who has sought renown about the world, and has reaped a full harvest of worldly favor, will find, after all, that there is no love, no admiration, no applause, so sweet to the soul as that which springs up in his

native place. It is there that he seeks to be gathered in peace and honor among his kindred and his early friends. And when the weary heart and failing head begin to warn him that the evening of life is drawing on, he turns as fondly as does the infant to the mother's arms, to sink to sleep in the bosom of the scene of his childhood.

How would it have cheered the spirit of the youthful bard when, wandering forth in disgrace upon a doubtful world, he cast back a heavy look upon his paternal home, could he have foreseen that, before many years, he should return to it covered with renown ; that his name should become the boast and glory of his native place ; that his ashes should be religiously guarded as its most precious treasure ; and that its lessening spire, on which his eyes were fixed in tearful contemplation, should one day become the beacon, towering amidst the gentle landscape, to guide the literary pilgrim of every nation to his tomb !



A Letter—Stratford-on-Avon.

BY

JOSEPH F. SABIN.

THE HOME OF SHAKESPEARE.

A LETTER—STRATFORD—UPON—AVON.

OXFORD, *May*, 1869.

DEAR ———;

I have just got back from Stratford-upon-Avon, and well aware of thine admiration of the great bard, I shall deliberately impose upon thee some account of my visit. So far as the length of the letter is concerned I shall surely get into trouble, for the more I write, the more must deficiencies be exhibited, whilst brevity with such a subject and without the soul of wit, must be as refreshing as husks to a dry throat. Indeed, did I set out to write all about Stratford thou shouldst herewith get a greater booke; did I seek to treat the theme with ornate elegance, or to assume the lofty diction appropriate to the subject, the commencement would be the beginning of the end. As there are so many reasons "*de me taire*" it is well to remark that the interest which one's friends take in personal memoranda is so strong that John Smith takes more entertainment in hearing his brother's adventures in Venice than in Lord Byron's

"I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs
A Palace and a Prison on each hand."

On the way to Stratford I passed through Warwick, and got a glimpse of the grand old castle, whose lofty towers and battlements sent my wits a wandering into the days of yore—of bows and arrows, knights and fair ladies, tournaments, chivalry and enchantment. Who has not heard of the wonderful Guy of Warwick, and, again, of the no less powerful, if less mythical, Earl, hight the king-maker?

Romantic Kenilworth is not far off—but alas for the cobweb structure whereon fancy commences to build—the whistle of the locomotive sends it to the four winds—the books which are before me are not Don Quixote's library with the Amadis de Gaul, or Palmerin of England—the red and yellow covered books containing the veritable histories of the great Guy of Warwick and of the Castle of Kenilworth are parts of the furniture of a railway station. Cervantes killed poor Don Quixote, and steam is stamping out his inheritance.

Stratford-upon-Avon is not far from Warwick, and useful, if not romantic, steam, soon brought me to its station, and for the first time I saw Shakespeare's natal city, nestled in the heart of merry England, and laved by the "flowery" Avon. Spring-time had put on a new coat of lovely verdure, and the landscape was gentle, the eye was filled with pleasure as the heart was gratified.

The graceful spire of Holy Trinity is the most prominent object in the general view of the village, a view not striking but quietly agreeable.

I soon made my way to Henley street, to the house wherein Shakespeare first saw the light. The building at present is "*restored*." It had undergone changes and alterations, but is now made to resemble its state as in Shakespearian days. The house is known, technically, as half-timbered, the framework of wood is not covered with plaster.

The room in which he was born is square, and of goodly size, the ceiling is rather low, and the old beams, black with time, are in open view. The great oaken beam forming the chimney piece attracted my notice. I found a large piece had been cut out of the corner, and remarking it, was informed that some Americans had sawn it out—that they had induced the person in charge of the premises to go out (to obtain change), and that in her absence they had cut out the wood,—as I had no opportunity of cross-questioning my informant I do not altogether accept the story. There is a window in this room the glass of which is filled with names, cut by diamonds. Among them I found Walter Scott's. I hinted that I should like to inscribe my name among them, if I could find room, but received for answer, what I expected,—that it was not allowed.

Of course I sat upon the chair, the veritable chair wherein Shakespeare took his ease. How much gratified I ought to have been, or how much of a foundation for the inspiration of genius, I rested upon, I cannot decide, for most certainly the chair had been re-bottomed within a short period, even

since Irving had sat in it. Alas ! what are we without faith !—with faith and new bottoms, that chair may be as immortal as Bottom the Weaver.

The house, which is a large one, is now appropriately used as a museum, and there are many items of interest to visitors, and matters which, both in an historical and pecuniary sense, are of great value. Old papers, old odds and ends of all sorts, and several of the plays of Shakespeare as they originally appeared in little quarto volumes.

A catalogue of the books and curiosities of the museum would occupy many pages. The titles of the first editions of Shakespeare's plays are somewhat quaint in orthography : "The most excellent Historie of the Merchant of Venice, with the extreame crueltie of Shylocke the Jewe towards the sayd Merchant, in cutting a just pound of his flesh, and the obtaining of Portia by the choyse of three chests. 1600. The tragicall Historie of Hamlet, prince of Denmarke. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect coppie. 1604."

Mr. James Lenox, and another New York collector of my acquaintance have between them some thirty of these little books, some of which cost as much as £200, and one, I believe, gave birth to enough enthusiasm to coax over fifteen hundred dollars across the water. The genius of Bibliomania has even carried to the West early editions of this man's works—to places where in Shakespeare's

time, the only leaves were on the trees and they who turned them the whistling winds.

The desk which is exhibited as Shakespeare's is in a very sad condition ; it has been cut, scratched, sawn and notched in a most unmerciful manner, and although scarcely able to keep body and soul together there be those who would take the poor thing's character away and say that though it doubtless came from the grammar school where Shakespeare got his little Latin and less Greek, there is no proof that it was *his* shining morning face that looked over that desk. In one of the rooms, written in pencil, is a poetical tribute to Shakespeare, by one of the Bonapartes.

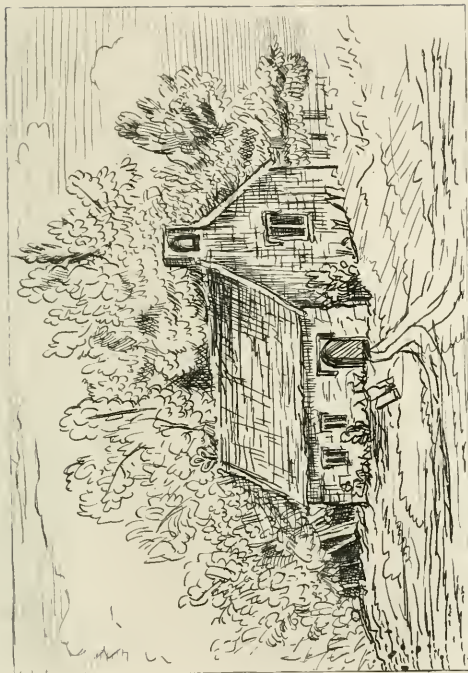
The Hunt portrait is exhibited in this building, and so arranged that when shut up it is in a fire-proof safe.

This house became the property of the nation, through public subscription raised chiefly by Mr. J. O. Halliwell. I have heard it related that some Americans were about to purchase the building and that Englishmen had to bestir themselves to prevent its removal to our side of the water ; but it would have been a doubtful glory for America, and no doubtful shame for England, to permit either its removal or destruction. Quite a pretty garden surrounds the place, and the very same flowers whose names and images decorate his lines, bloom in the soil his youthful feet have pressed. The house is isolated from other dwellings to avoid danger of fire.

The house is accepted as the birthplace of Shakespeare from tradition rather than evidence. Of New Place, Anne Hathaway's cottage, and his burial-place, the documentary history is good and sufficient.

John Shakespeare married Mary Arden—not of the forest of Arden, but of the village of Wilmcote. She was the daughter of a gentleman. John Shakespeare seems to have been a dealer in wool ; he was a man of some influence and ambition, for he held the office of justice of the peace and high bailiff. William Shakespeare was the eldest child, born on the 23d of April, 1564. John Shakespeare had several other children, and it is said that the increase of his family occasioned the early removal of William from school.

William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway ; he was nineteen and she twenty-seven. What he did for subsistence immediately after his marriage is not definitely ascertained. He soon after went to London, and in a few years made the acquaintance of the men who, with him, have made the age of Elizabeth glorious—Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, Selden, Myddleton. The Mermaid Tavern, in Friday Street ; the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, held many a jovial crew of revellers ; but they were thinkers as well as wits and jolly good fellows, and though some of them saddened and shortened their lives by too much drinking and feasting, the author



Church at Luddington in which Shakespeare was married to Anne Hathaway.

of Hamlet and creator of Falstaff, could not have wasted many hours in mere wine bibbing. The tavern-haunting proclivities of illustrious Englishmen in the good old days must not be mistaken for the mere desires of thirst and time-killing. The parlors of the taverns were the trysting-places, mayhap, of men who discussed philosophy or broke friendly lances in combats of wit. Didn't the worthy Dr. Johnson go to the Mitre Tavern, and, by the bye, take so much wine that poor Boswell got the headache in trying to keep up with him. Such fellows as these were glorious revellers—not the revellers who see double before they find any wit at all, and then so attenuated that it is invisible to sober men. Even to this day, in England, men of considerable refinement and culture may be found in the evenings in cosy back parlors of taverns. I have met in a back parlor of a quiet tavern men who, whilst replenishing their glasses with “another three-pen’orth, my dear,” discussed literature, art and politics with refinement and acumen,—men of position and knowledge; so that it is not just to judge of the roysterers of merry England by the habits and qualities of a bar-room loungee in New York.

Leaving the old house and sauntering up the quiet streets and observing the inhabitants, the more the wonder grew that such a man should rise from such a place; not that the sweet singer of the meadows and the daisy and lily, and the reader of the books

in brooks should have been born in Warwickshire, but that the grand philosophic genius and the master painter of human nature should lift himself from the quiet unexciting life of a rural village. Had he been reared where nature is sublime, or where men and passions are multitudinous, our ideas of the "eternal fitness of things," would be better satisfied. But, nevertheless, so it is, that the man whose thoughts are wisdom for time, whose words flow in majesty, shine in beauty, or twinkle in brightness—whose depth is beyond the wise, and whose simplicity holds the multitude—this man's early life was passed in a cleanly little market town, and his early associations were among men whose life was hum-drum ; people well content with living and being, satisfied to keep their incomes apace with their necessities, walking below philosophy and Hamlet, and above passion and excitement.

The half dreaming, half puzzled sensations of a man who finds himself actually at some long venerated shrine, or in some awful presence, are somewhat difficult of expression, more especially for one who has not learned to make sight-seeing a business, or whose enthusiasm has not suffered the chill of incredulity or the surfeit of quantity.

The little town numbers but thirty-five hundred inhabitants. The river Avon takes its rise at Naseby, and empties into the Severn at Tewkesbury. The principal bridge is Clopton's. There are a few little towns in the neighborhood, Bidford, &c., as mentioned by Shakespeare.

In 1597 Shakespeare purchased and remodeled a dwelling called the "greate house." He named it "New Place." It was the last house which he inhabited. The zealous pilgrim to Stratford-on-Avon will not see the building ; it was destroyed through the testy selfishness of a man who professed godliness. The Rev. Francis Gastrell became the last owner of the house. Shakespeare willed it to his daughter, Mrs. Hall. From her it went to his granddaughter, and, passing through other hands, was purchased by Gastrell.

It is traditionally known of Shakespeare that he planted a "Mulberry Tree." Sir Hugh Clopton, who owned the house before Gastrell, took pride in exhibiting it to visitors. Gastrell was bothered by men who, in veneration for the divinely-gifted poet, and with the human curiosity which applies itself to the observation of relics, memorials, etc., plied the owner of the house and tree with questions, to such an extent that the beatitude of the meek might have been earned by his reverence, but he fell behind the wise man who is greater than he that taketh a city—his wrath boiled over and he cut down the mulberry tree. The history of the cutting down of this tree is not so widely known as the story of the hatchet in the hands of the immortal George Washington, yet there is no visitor to Stratford, or student of the biography of Shakespeare, who is not tempted to anathematize this unworthy.

The churchman was not entirely relieved by this piece of wickedness, for, though he axed the tree, still people axed him questions; and when he left the place for a temporary residence elsewhere, the city of Stratford taxed the property, because he left it in possession of the servants, practically maintaining a household. He paid the tax, but in splenetic vengeance pulled down the house, declaring it should never be assessed again.

Gastrell is his name; ugly it is, and unpleasant its memory. We read, by the way, that English churchmen, have in old days exercised functions and performed acts, which certainly to Americans appear strangely related to clerical professions and duties; but public opinion, in its nineteenth century strength, has suppressed the more daring inconsistencies and incongruities occasionally permitted in the clerical official of former days. Americans in general are not aware that the church in England is semi-political, that in many places clergymen are justices of the peace, and in some rural districts are looked upon with as much awe as reverence. The primogeniture laws of England preserve large estates, but unfortunately leave many persons who to dig they cannot, to beg they are ashamed, so, under the influence of the fortunate they are provided with positions in the army, the navy and the church; and it happens that in many instances, holy offices have been accepted by men of tastes and feelings not at all in harmony with the

profession. I was amused the other evening when at Oxford in company with some of the college men, they sat up smoking and playing cards till one o'clock, Sunday morning. One of them, who was preparing for the church, said he thought he would go to prayers in the morning, as he wanted to give thanks for the arrival of his new breeches ; —and now that I have perpetrated one irreverence in repetition, I will mention *à propos* of the English law of descent, a Yankee reply that amused me considerably the first time I heard it. A cockney whose pronunciation, though not nasal, might be called mouthy, said "aw 'ave you the laws of primogenituah in youah country, and the right of hentail?" Says the Yankee—"don't b'lieve we know what that is, but we've got plenty of cocktail and a very good thing it is too." I have got a long way off my subject, and the remotest excuse for alluding to cocktail, is the fact that Shakespeare himself, on one memorable occasion, got something under his waist-band which was more than his legs could carry.

In dismissing the subject of the crabbed clergyman it is not necessary to speak in praise of the good-fellows of the cloth whose practice of their professions has honored their church and themselves.

It was after Shakespeare had amassed some wealth by his works in London that he came to Stratford-on-Avon and bought the "Greate House." It is said that the Earl of Southampton at one time gave him £1000 to assist him in a purchase he was a mind to—

perhaps it was at this time, though the amount is probably exaggerated, as at that period £1000 was an enormous sum for a present to a writer of plays.

Unfortunately no graphic record of New Place exists as in Shakespeare's life. Old views of the place represent the building as it was about a century later. Mr. Halliwell has written a big book about New Place, and no doubt one could construct from the data a picture possibly as near the reality as some of the pre-historic monsters, which scientific men have built, with a bone or two for foundation and theory for superstructure.*

New Place is, or was, on the High street, at the corner opposite the chapel of the guild ;—next door to the site of the old mansion, is a dwelling-house, occupied as a museum. It contains many articles of interest to the Shakespearian pilgrim, many little things formerly belonging to New Place. The small

* A closer investigation into the history of New Place reveals the fact, that the house which Gastrell pulled down had been previously rebuilt, and that the foundations alone were Shakespearian. The general belief is, that Gastrell destroyed the ancient dwelling ; and perhaps he is visited with an amount of censure unmerited, in some respects ; and perhaps some Benedict readers, not so bold as Petruchio, may have their hearts softened towards him, when they learn of fair evidence that the act was instigated by Mrs. Gastrell ; and still there may be others who, like Beadle Bumble's accusers, will say that the law supposes a man's wife to act under his directions, —and they will laugh rather than accept Bumble's disrespectful reply, that " If the law supposes that, the law is a ass, a idiot."

sum of three pence is paid by each visitor, a charge which goes to keep the house in order.

A tall and very stout gentleman, elderly, bland and kind, took an interest in exhibiting the things in charge, and after we had looked over the curiosities he took us out to see the gardens. Gastrell had the buildings pulled down, but he did not pull anything up, so the foundation walls remain—and the well. Every particle of soil has been thoroughly searched and sifted ; the well has been explored, and of the smallest article found a note has been taken. I was seized with a mild sort of kleptomania, and had made up my mind to pocket a small piece of stone or plaster from the wall, but ! talk of Argus, the man with one hundred eyes !—this man was all eyes, and yet he was childlike and bland. When I was innocent of any intention he appeared to have his eyes and mind far away, but when I concluded there would be no impropriety in stooping down to pick up a pebble, an easy, unconscious looking eye was glancing over my way. That man would be worth a fortune in a counting house—he would see everything and catch everybody, and never appear to be looking. I concluded that his powers of perception were supernatural, and considered that it would be too wicked and irreverent to remove even a bit of crumbling wall. In taking a walk with the aforesaid old gentleman, he waxed eloquent, though I should have as little expected sentiment from him as from a well-conditioned alderman ; evidently he felt a personal pride in

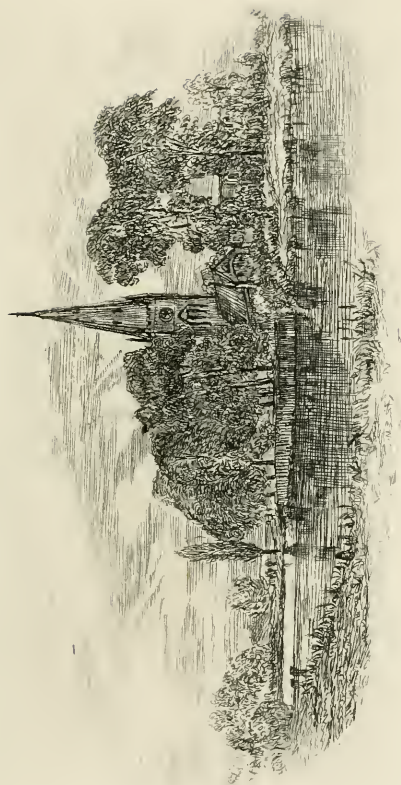
his duty and an honor in serving the memory of Shakespeare. He said that the domain under his charge was the best of all ; for, did he not tread the same earth and did he not occupy the same space wherein Shakespeare moved and had his being,—did not his footsteps lay in the same garden where the immortal bard walked and mused ?

The old gentleman took us to look at a very ancient Mulberry Tree. It is in the rear garden. Its genealogy is said to be known ; though there be some who say that it had no immediate relation to the old one, others believe that it is a scion of the tree planted by Shakespeare.

The grounds attached to New Place are quite extensive, and in proportion to the dignity of the old house. The garden is ornamented by the piece of sculpture by Banks, formerly in Pall Mall. It is engraved in Boydell's series. It represents Shakespeare reclining between Poetry and Painting.

A network of iron is placed on the ruined foundations of the house, and everything is preserved with such care that doubtless Gastrell, if permitted to express an opinion, would say nineteenth century folk had gone mad.

The church of Holy Trinity meets the eye, a charming object, in proportion elegant, in the architecture of its parts, so varied as to tell of long life and a struggle through centuries, the relentless tooth of time has been suffered to decorate and soften, not to annihilate. The spire that surmounts the



pile is lofty and well proportioned, an avenue of trees with branches arched leads to the western entrance. This green branch-covered pathway, the tall elms which rise at the boundary, and the Avon at the rear margin, are no feeble adjuncts to the builded beauty of the church.

Entering the holy edifice I removed my hat and bowed my head with a reverence as well for the greatest created as the Creator—but I could scarcely realize that my feet were making echoes in the temple that held the dust of Shakespeare, that here in religious response was raised the mortal voice which, now immortal, is confined only by the girdle of the earth.

The first objects apparent within the dim religious light were tombs and monuments, some interesting for the names as associated with Shakespeare's biography, and some by no means insignificant as works of sculpture. How much more worthy of praise the ancient mode of perpetuating the memory of the dead by sculptured form, than the fashion to lavish modern wealth on stones and carving, heterogeneous and meaningless !

The ancient font from which Shakespeare is believed to have been baptized, stands in the south end of the transept ; the pedestal is gone and the bowl is damaged. Passing through into the chancel a few steps brought me to the resting-place of the mortal part of him whom the world delighteth to call immortal. The flooring is raised a step in front of

the chancel railing, and one of the stones forming the pavement, is at the same time the tablet whereon are graven the words familiar even to the ignorant.

GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE:
BLEST BE Y^E MAN Y^T SPARES TJIES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y^T MOVES MY BONES.

On one side of this slab is the stone commemorating his wife, who died some years after him ; on the other side are slabs covering the remains of other relatives, including his son-in-law, Dr. Hall, and his two daughters and grand-daughter.

The monument to Shakespeare is placed in the wall, several feet above the stone. The bust of Shakespeare is under an arch which is supported by columns of marble, decorated above by figures of cherubs. The bust, life-size, represents the poet in the attitude of inspiration, a cushion before him, and a pen in his hand. The bust was originally colored to resemble life, conformably with the taste of the times—eyes, light hazel, hair and beard auburn—scarlet doublet, under a loose black gown, without sleeves. The cushion was crimson on the top and green underneath. Meddlesome Malone painted it white ; at present it is restored to the original colors.

The inscription upon the stone is probably the work of a friend of Shakespeare's, or written by some one who had known the poet's wishes. There are

passages in *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*, which, doubtless, express the poet's own feelings in regard to the removal of the dead. Were it not for the epitaph, doggerel as it may be, Shakespeare's dust would have been removed to Westminster Abbey. The desire to rest near his home is not only a mark of his affection for his birth-place, but the fulfilment of it must be a source of gratification to posterity. But a few days ago I was in the vaults of the Pantheon—the temple built for the honor of great Frenchmen. All was cold, gloomy, sealed up from light and warmth. From out of a stone coffin came the ruddy hand of Rousseau, inspiring a vulgar terror as it was unexpectedly lit up by the flambeau of the guide. Were Shakespeare's bones in Westminster, Garrick could not have sung :

Flow on, silver Avon ! in song ever flow,
Be the swans on thy bosom still whiter than snow,
Ever full be thy stream, like his fame may it spread,
And the turf ever hallow'd which pillow'd his head.

Nor could I have enjoyed my visit half so much. "Poet's Corner" is rich enough to spare him, and his tomb is a Mecca in itself.

Upon the monument are two inscriptions, one in English, the other Latin. They attest the fact that Shakespeare was held in high contemporary estimation.

Not far from Shakespeare lies John Combe. It is said of this man that he asked Shakespeare to write his epitaph—the following was the result :

“ Ten in the hundred lies here ingraved,
“ ‘Tis a hundred to ten his soul is not sav’d ;
“ If any man ask, who lies in this tomb ?
“ Oh ! oh ! quoth the devil, ’ tis my John-a-combe.”

It is not accepted as Shakespeare’s, because he was the gentle Shakespeare, and known to bear friendly relations with Combe, but it does not seem altogether improbable that Shakespeare should have said a sharp thing in a joke, for the whole affair was of the nature of a supposition. Possibly the old gentleman was fishing for compliments, and perhaps he had been a little overreaching in money transactions with some of the Shakespeare family.

Much interest has been manifested by antiquaries as to which is the most authentic portrait of Shakespeare. The bust was erected a short time after the poet’s death ; and there is a resemblance in the engraved portrait annexed to the first folio edition—and Ben Jonson has written beneath this portrait that

This figure, that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut ;
Wherein the graver had a strife
With nature, to out-doo the life.
O ! could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brass as he hath hit
His Face, the Print would then surpasse
All that was ever writ in brass.
But since he cannot, reader, looke
Not on his picture, but his booke.

B. J.

It is the same Ben Jonson who said, "I love the man and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any."

Yet there be writers who have tortured themselves, if not many readers, to prove that Shakespeare wasn't Shakespeare—he was perhaps Bacon or somebody else.

The church is not all of one period ; its history can be traced to William the Conqueror's time, if not earlier. The town itself commences its history in the 6th or 7th century. Of the building, as it now stands, the tower and nave are the oldest—the transept was erected in the 15th century by Hugh Crompton, and the most beautiful part of it, the chancel, was erected by Dr. Balshall, in the 15th century. In 1700 the roof was altered and the old glass remaining was collected and put in the centre of the east window. The steeple is modern. Previous to 1764 the steeple was of wood, but in that year the people of Stratford built the present one of Warwickshire stone. Total height, 163 feet ; total length of church, 176 feet.

The charnel house—a look into which is assigned as the origin of Shakespeare's dislike to a removal, as exhibited in his epitaph—was not used after the Reformation, and in 1800 it was pulled down. Dr. Balshall built his chancel in the place of an older one. Around the church is a graveyard, well tenanted—bounded on the East by the Avon—that it is the gentle Avon and flows softly is as true as true poetical

description. In the land of the Mississippi and the Hudson it would scarce be called a river. A stone's throw will traverse it.

The gentle Shakespeare, happy in that which was in unison with his nature, must have loved this stream. To me it was inexpressibly charming in contemplation. I enjoyed dividing not association from character. The river, with the image of heaven on its bosom, flowed by so gently that it seemed thoughtful of the sleepers by its side—the murmur of insects, the occasional note of a bird and the rustling of the leaves were sounds of life and motion, but not inharmonious.

“Thou soft-flowing Avon—by thy silver stream,
Of things more than mortal, sweet Shakespeare would dream ;
The fairies by moonlight dance round his green bed,
For hallowed the turf is which pillow'd his head.”

How delightful is the walk from Holy Trinity to Shottery ! It is a refreshing change from the solemn temple where sentiments have gathered upon the mind reflecting and subdued, to the sweet and tender green of the fields, England's hedgerows, the twitter of the birds and gaiety of sunshine. I confess that I danced over the ground light-headed as light-heeled, and took a bound over the first fence that came in the way. How pretty the church looked, its rising spire shepherding the dwellings ! That afternoon the air was delightful, quickening, exhilarating.

Footsteps ! pick yourselves up ! For hath not

Shakespeare, when near thine own age, skipped along the same path, made sweet ballads to a damosel's eyebrow ;—she dwelt over the fields—the scent of the new-mown hay is sweet ; daisies pied and violets blue do paint the meadows with delight. Shine, bright eyes, beat youthful pulse ;—see everything joyous, the earth happy, and the heavens propitious, for two stars there be will glow more brightly at thy coming :—just beyond the turning of a green lane, on a bank side, with a flowery garden in front neath shady trees, is a thatched house wherein sweet Anne dwells. Let the soft moon tell of the meeting and the breeze that kisses the roses recount the sweet sorrows of parting. My inky pen does not flow with the figures to write of the love of the author of *Romeo and Juliet*.

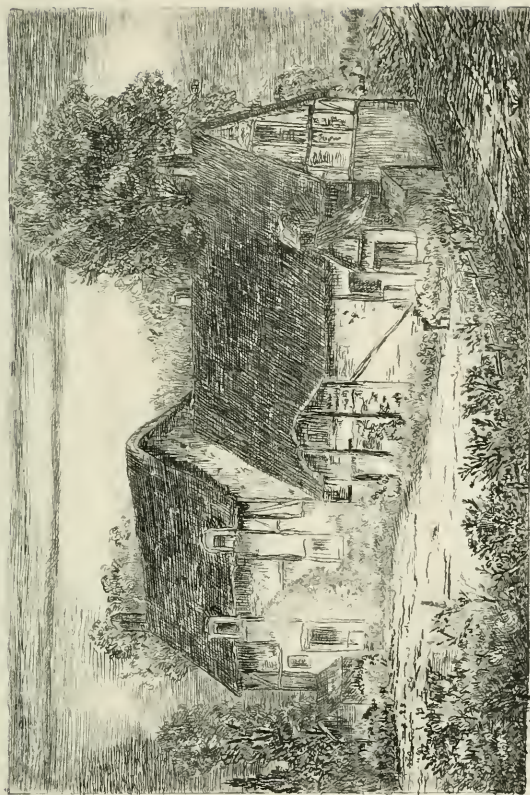
Anne Hathaway was the daughter of a yeoman—well-to-do. When Shakespeare married her she was eight years his senior. That Shakespeare should have won a woman so much older than himself is by no means remarkable, so far as regards the overthrow of the usual prejudice which women have for o'er-youthful suitors. What woman could resist the wooing of the man, comely in person, sweet in demeanor, who could talk love like *Romeo*, and knew the human heart like Shakespeare ? Doubtless the young woman was of exceeding beauty and attractiveness, and possessed qualities which in the young poet's eyes were more attractive than youth.

From the fact of Shakespeare's return to his home,

the purchase of a "greate house" and the remodeling it for the comfort of his family, it is not too much to infer that his married life was happy.

I made a sketch of the house, but unfortunately time moved so fast that a rough outline was all that I could pencil. It needs no flight of the imagination or rose-tinted crayon to make the Shottery cottage a charming subject for the artist,—its length broken up with windows and open timbers, picturesque shadows in the doorways and under the eaves, all capped by the thatched roof, that cottage covering which has always poetry in its name. Shading the whole are some beautiful trees, which kindly weave their branches over the straight line of the roof. The foreground is a flowery garden, bound by a leafy fence.

The old lady in charge, was in keeping as well, her wrinkles in sympathy with the time-furrowed boards—her child-like manners and unaffected bearing quite in unison with the rustic simplicity of the dwelling. What a false note would have been struck in the charming chord of romance, rusticity and hero-worship had there been placed in charge a quick pert young man like an American ticket-agent, or one of those snuffling, fish-blooded individuals whose vocation as showmen seems to be to make one feel sorrowful. They may be fat,—it is from the want of emotion—not from the abundance of laughter. I remember one fellow who showed me about St. Paul's Cathedral. Mark Tapley would have felt it a credit to be jolly in



J. F. Sabin fecit. Aqua fortis

his presence. Such fellows should be paid more to at least simulate some interest in that which they talk about. Perhaps it would have the same effect of which Steele's undertaker complained — he scolded one of his mutes for not putting on the proper amount of sorrow, although he had increased his wages. "Why, you rascal!" says he, "the more I pay you the gladder you look."

The cottage was really a triple house. The relics which are exhibited, of the Shakespearian period, are not numerous, and as to their authenticity, doubts are strong. The large high post bedstead is certainly very ancient; a settle is at the door; it is old and weather-beaten enough to pass for the original courting stool with those who are not specially inquisitive as to its history.

The interior of the house is interesting, and the kitchen suggestive of some of the old Dutch masters.

The visitors' register was dotted with the names of Americans.

On the road from Shottery to Stratford I was *curtseyed* to in the genuine old fashion, by the children on the way, a mode of salutation which the old lady in charge of the place, appeared to use habitually to visitors.

I came upon a shop wherein I observed many curiosities, old pieces of furniture, great tall clocks, constructed in the days when a clock was an intricate mechanical contrivance, and when time was not reduced to so small a quantity of money as \$1.00 for

a New England ticker. The owner was a Mr. Marshall. I wonder if related to the engraver of Shakespeare's portrait as affixed to his poems? He had several odds and ends, among them a goblet carved of mulberry wood, and another, a little oaken box. The goblet was rather elaborately cut, and certainly from a tree of great age. He declared with all honorable dignity that the wood was from the present aged tree, from which a limb was cut to lessen its weight. And the wooden box was made from the oak coming from the house in Henley street, in its repair and reconstruction. He did not make so great an oath as did one Sharp, of the former tree, but produced certificates, receipts for the wood, &c. I sighed for the proneness to unbelief which exists in the minds of men, who, shrewd fellows, do not often part with their money in exchange for relics—so I bought the goblet for about its value as a piece of carving—and so far as a relic goes shall feel satisfied in the future with the fact of its reminding me of Stratford-on-Avon. As for the oaken box I shall give that to an eccentric friend of mine who lives in New York ; he is a nice old fellow who reverences the immortal bard, and treasures up old forgotten lore, and loves a book which he thinks Shakespeare may have read. It is said of him that he keeps many rare and choice volumes in barrels ; it is by no means a difficult flight of the imagination to see him groping about among them, holding a candle and looking for all the world like a Guy Fawkes with the powder-barrels. The story is a somewhat strange

one, and I have been inclined to doubt that he really had any rarities hidden away in this manner—but I have put the question to him straight and he has never denied it outright, and a request for a book which I knew he possessed, has been so frequently met with the statement that he could not get at it, that the suspicion of his eccentricity is confirmed. I mean to give him this box, and perhaps, as he loves everything relating to the immortal bard, he will tell me what he has hidden away.

I took dinner at a tavern, the name of which I forget, but it was interesting and notable for the fact that the rooms instead of being numbered, were named after the plays of Shakespeare,—*Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, &c. It would have been pleasant to have slept a night in one of these rooms. Possibly a night-cap of sack and sugar, and a sea-coal fire might set the chairs, tables and bed-posts into transformations. Such freaks have been most delightfully recounted by one Washington Irving; and such bright, jolly, and captivating ghosts as came to his bed-side, or in his drowsy arm chairs, seldom visit ordinary mortals. I regret that I did not inquire if they supplied *Falstaff's* room with sack and sugar, and was even neglectful enough to ask if they kept the article in the house.

It was shortly after Shakespeare's marriage that he got into the deer-stealing scrape. Biographers and commentators distress themselves unnecessarily to prove that Shakespeare did not steal deer. I think it almost certain that he did, and from the

American stand-point, it seems not a particularly discreditable transaction—for a youth of spirit to drive a shaft through the side of a running deer—nor is it worth while attempting to prove him a man altogether perfect. He got drunk once, and waking up gave a short descriptive sketch of the neighboring towns :

Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
Haunted Hilbro', hungry Grafton,
Dudging Exhall, papist Wixford,
Beggarly Broom, and drunken Bidford.

Perhaps if I had taken enough of sack and sugar to have made as effective a sketch of Stratford, I should have done better than to write this long letter.

Is it a cause for regret that the life of Shakespeare is clouded in obscurity? We have the truths of his existence, birth, marriage and death, so undisputed, that he is not a myth; then the mystery and doubt is but a stimulus to the curious; the man is greater for the mist, as the genii for the vapor and cloud. A Pepys-like diary by Shakespeare would but make him more of the earth, earthy. We have now but to read his works, and hear that he was the gentle Shakespeare; and we would not too eagerly barter imagination for knowledge—how seldom is the drawing of one so beautiful as the painting of the other!

Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.

Yours, etc.,

JOSEPH F. SABIN.

The following two letters are prefixed to the first editions of "VENUS AND ADONIS," and "THE RAPE OF LUCRECE," and comprise the COMPLETE PROSE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.



TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLEY,
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON AND BARON OF TICHFIELD.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden : only, if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labor. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear not are so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so barren a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content ; which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation.

Your honour's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY WRIOTHESLEY,
EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON AND BARON OF TICHFIELD.

The love I dedicate to your lordship is without end ; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours ; what I have to do is yours ; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater. Meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life still lengthened with all happiness.

Your lordship's in all duty,

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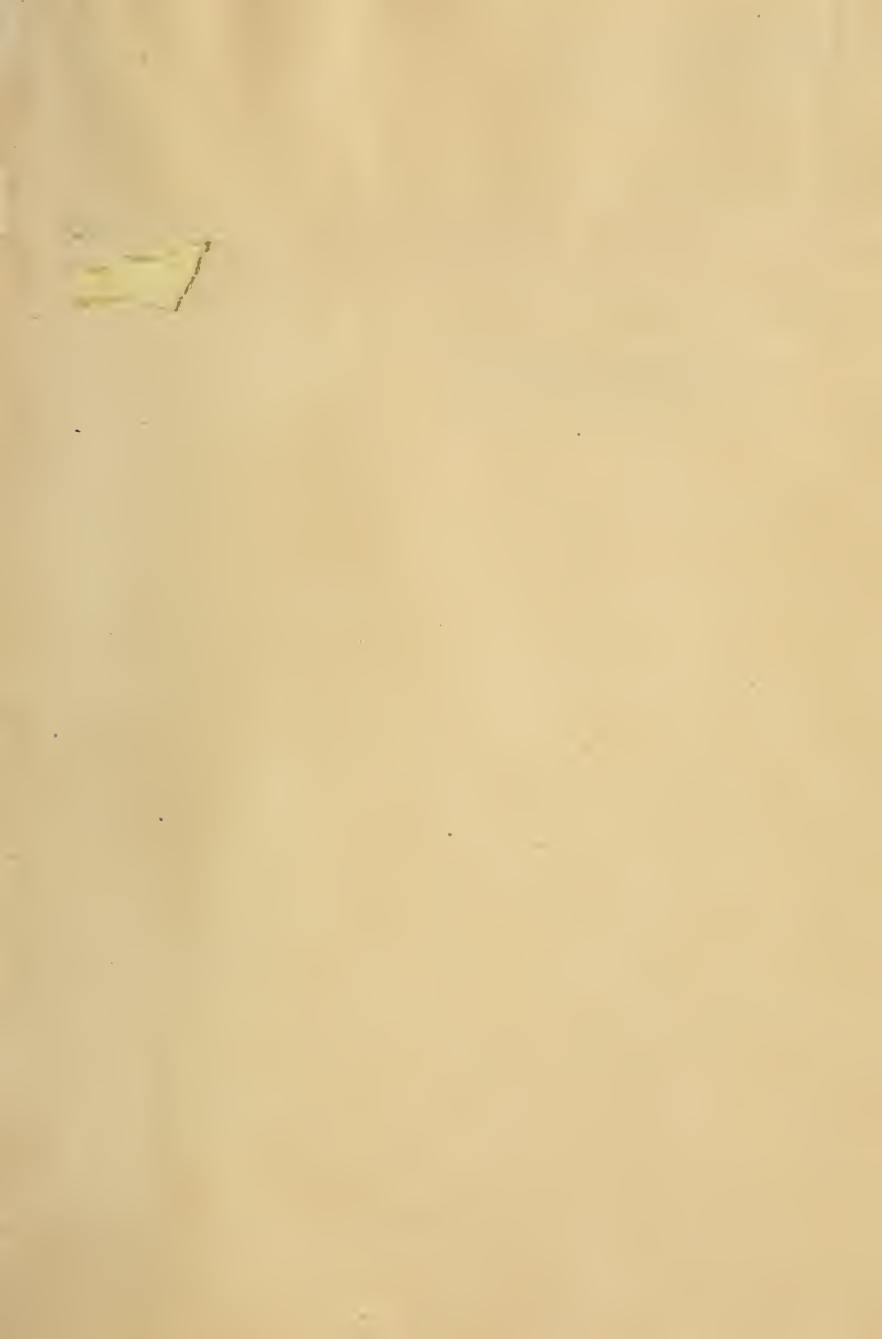
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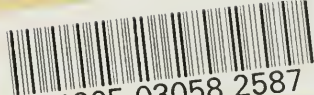






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